



Rothbury First School

Intimate Care Policy

March 2024

Review date March 2025

Rothbury First School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We are committed to promoting inclusion for all children whatever their needs including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who may have an increased dependency and/or require practical support with intimate care needs whilst in school. We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for intimate care of children and young people will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We are committed to ensuring that children are treated with sensitivity and respect.

We recognise that every child is an individual and will have a unique development pattern.

Toilet training is a developmental stage that may or may not create anxiety for the child and their parents and carers. Some children will be out of nappies between the ages of two and three, for others it may be later and, for some children, it may never happen. The term 'toilet training' suggests that children can somehow be taught to have control over their bladder and bowels however bladder and bowel control is largely dependent on the maturity of the child's nervous system although anxiety may interrupt the emerging control.

Our aim is to support and reassure parents and carers and welcome them and their child into our setting and help remove pressure on parents/carers and children by not insisting they are toilet trained before they are accepted into our early years setting and school. This intimate care policy supports these aims.

What is 'Intimate care'?

We define intimate care as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children and young people carry out for themselves, but which some are unable to do. Intimate care tasks are associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene that demands direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of the genitals. Examples include support with dressing and undressing (underwear), changing incontinence pads and nappies, helping someone use the toilet or washing intimate parts of the body, cleaning a pupil (to skin) who has soiled him/herself or vomited. It is also associated with other accidents that may require a child to remove their clothes. These include changes required as a result of water play, messy play, sickness and weather. SEND pupils may be unable to meet their own care needs for a variety of reasons and will require regular support.

Rationale

Intimate care is considered a higher risk activity in terms of abuse or allegation of abuse, and it is important that there are guidelines to protect those being cared for and the staff carrying out the care. We take the view that everyone is safer if expectations are clear and approaches are as consistent as possible. The staff at Rothbury First School have recognised the need to design guidelines that encompass all aspects of procedures. They apply to every member of staff involved in the intimate care of the children and they aim to support good practice.

Therefore, our guidelines have the following goals:

- To protect children and staff who are required to carry out intimate care tasks
- To promote good practice and outline appropriate procedures for intimate care tasks which ensure a consistent approach towards intimate care
- To involve parents/carers and the children in the process to ensure this meets the needs of individual children
- To reassure children and support their development of personal independence by encouraging them to make choices and decisions as part of the process

All staff involved in Intimate Care routines will have been DBS/police checked and will receive appropriate training to carry out this aspect of their work. Volunteers or visitors will not be allowed to carry out intimate care.

The school takes the view that the issue of privacy is important. Many intimate care tasks are carried out by one person. This practice is actively supported unless the task requires two people.

Guidance for Staff

- Respond positively and provide practical and emotional support to children to enable them to develop their self-help skills towards independence
- Always give consideration for how best to respect children's privacy and dignity.
- Check for permission. If no permission held follow procedures under permission below.
- Be aware of children's individual needs and preferences, cultural and religious needs, allergies (i.e. individual care plans).
- Never undertake a task unless you are confident in your ability, if unsure about what to do ask a colleague for help (do not guess).
- Change children in the agreed, discreet area with all of necessary equipment available before you commence i.e. changing mat, protective gloves, wipes, nappies, change of clothes etc.
- Inform another member of staff that you are about to undertake intimate care
- Have regard to health and safety follow good hygiene practices at all times including:
 - follow NCC Lifting and Handling/Moving guidelines
 - never leave a child unattended in a toilet/changing area
 - use appropriate barrier materials including disposable glove/aprons
 - undertaken appropriate cleansing/disinfecting of surfaces
 - apply only creams supplied by the child's parents/carers
 - use child's individual supplies wherever possible (i.e. items supplied by parents)
 - ensure correct disposal of soiled materials/nappies
- Keep appropriate records i.e. a record to be kept of each intimate care episode, stored confidentially.
- Intimate Care tasks should never be approached light heartedly. If a child has soreness or something to cause you concern, follow School's Child Protection Procedures.
- If children ask for assistance to wipe their bottoms, encourage them, where appropriate, to perform this task themselves. Wherever appropriate, decision making should be an integral part of the process – e.g. Do you want to go to the toilet or not? Should we wash your hands or face first? Can I help fasten your trousers?
- If a member of staff enters a cubicle to assist a child the door should be left open. Children may close cubicle doors themselves for privacy.

Guidance for Nappy Changing

Nappy changing is an opportunity for a one to one relationship between the adult and the child. It should be a positive experience with eye-to-eye contact and conversation taking place.

- All children will be changed in a discreet area with all of the necessary equipment to hand i.e. changing mat, protective gloves, wipes, clean nappies, change of clothes etc.
- Children will only be changed by a fully cleared member of staff as soon as necessary. Volunteers shall not be allowed to carry out this task.
- Cultural and religious needs will be taken into account at all times. Parents should inform staff of any particular needs.
- Staff will inform other members of staff when intimate care is necessary.
- Children will be changed in privacy and treated with respect
- Staff shall reassure children who need to be changed and help them to remain relaxed, comfortable and safe.
- Children shall never be left unattended in the changing area.
- Only creams supplied by the child's parents/carers will be applied
- Staff will wear a fresh pair of disposable gloves when changing each child
- Changing surfaces shall be disinfected after each change and health and safety regarded at all times
- All changes of nappies or clothing shall be recorded. An example copy of a record is attached.

Resources

School will seek parental views on practices at home. Preferred materials will be used and parents will be encouraged to resource their child's needs whenever possible.

Permission

Intimate care will only be given after parents have given permission for staff to clean/change the child. All parents/carers who have children in school are therefore asked to sign a permission slip so that staff can clean/change their child if necessary.

If permission is not given, the school will contact the parent/carer or emergency contact to organise for the child to be cleaned and changed. In the event that the parent/carer or emergency contact cannot be contacted, the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid the child.

Permission form for intimate care

If a child wets or soils themselves whilst they are in school, it is important that measures are taken to have them changed and if necessary cleaned as quickly as possible. Our staff are experienced at carrying out this task if you wish them to do so or, if preferred, the school can contact you or your emergency contact who will be asked to attend without delay. Rothbury First School has an Intimate Care Policy which is available to view on our website or a copy can be obtained from the school office. Please fill out the permission slip below stating your preference.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Brotherton/Helen Duffield

Headteachers

Name of Child..... Class.....

Please tick as appropriate

- I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet/soil themselves whilst in the care of Rothbury First School.
- I do not give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet/soil themselves. The school will contact me or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed. I understand that in the event that I or my emergency contact cannot be contacted, the staff will act appropriately and may need to change/clean my child.

Signature of Parent/Carer..... Date.....

NORTHUMBERLAND CHILDREN'S SERVICES GUIDANCE ON INTIMATE CARE

Lack of toilet training should not be a barrier for children attending early years settings.

The Disability Discrimination Act makes specific requirements regarding children with disabilities/additional needs, which has implications for our practice for all children.

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it clear that:

- If a child cannot be toilet trained in time for playgroup/nursery because of a disability/additional need, the setting has a duty to look into the situation and consider how they can make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable the child to attend. This means they have to think about what can be done within the setting to allow the child to be changed when necessary and for a toilet training programme to be supported as and when appropriate.
- The setting also has a legal duty to anticipate adjustments to accommodate disabilities/additional needs and not simply to respond to them on arrival.
- There must be no 'blanket policies' in any setting. For example, "We don't take children unless they are toilet trained/we don't take children in nappies".

Settings must anticipate having to make 'reasonable adjustments' to meet the needs of all children with disabilities/additional needs who may come into the setting in the future. The setting may make a decision regarding reasonable adjustments in consultation with the responsible body for that setting - governing body, LA, voluntary, private, independent group etc. Any decision about how reasonable adjustments are due to cost, health and safety or resource issues should be taken in the light of the Disability Discrimination Act. **There would have to be 'material and substantial' reasons not to make these adjustments.** Parents wanting their child to be educated in the setting would have the right to challenge this decision through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDAT).

Toileting and intimate care for all children

The Disability Discrimination Act can only make requirements of a setting in respect of children with disabilities/additional needs.

Northumberland would, as an inclusive Local Authority, have an expectation that settings follow the guidelines below:

- All settings should be prepared to change nappies and support toilet training programmes for all children regardless of whether or not they have a specific diagnosis or disability.
- An intimate care policy should be in place in all early years settings and schools and should be adhered to by all staff.
- In order to maintain high quality and inclusive childcare, practitioners will be expected to change nappies.
- Parents and carers should never feel under pressure to have their child toilet trained before they will be accepted into an early years unit - it may leave them feeling anxious or inadequate.
- Practitioners should support and reassure parents and carers that their child will be welcomed into the group.

Every child is an individual and, therefore, will have a unique developmental pattern. Toilet training is a developmental stage that may create anxiety for the child and their parents and carers. Some children will be out of nappies between the ages of two and three - for others it will be later and for some it may never happen.

If 14% of 3 year olds sometimes wet their pants, this means that, for every one hundred 3 year olds who go through a setting, 14 will sometimes wet their pants. The term 'toilet training' suggests that children can somehow be taught to have control over their bladder and bowels. Early years practitioners with a sound knowledge of child development will know that bladder and bowel control is largely dependent on the maturity of the child's nervous system although anxiety may interrupt the emerging control.

